

C. Amendment to the claims

Please amend claims 1-4 as follows.

Pending claims 1-4:

Claim 1: (Currently amended) A slurry processing system for pumping slurry from a slurry processing unit to a treatment facility of the type including a containment vessel for receiving contaminated slurry, means for discharging a chemical decontamination reagent into the containment vessel for treating the slurry, and means for separating sludge from the slurry, thereby yielding process treatment water and treated sludge for disposal or further treatment, comprising in combination:

Said
a slurry processing unit including a hopper for receiving contaminated sludge dredged from a body of water and means for mixing make-up water with sludge in the hopper thereby producing an aqueous slurry;

a treatment facility;

a slurry delivery pipeline connectable in flow communication with the slurry processing unit for transporting slurry from the slurry processing unit to the treatment facility for discharge into the containment vessel; and

a make-up water return pipeline for transporting make-up water derived from the aqueous phase of the slurry processed at the treatment facility to the slurry processing unit a return pipeline connectable in flow communication with the containment vessel for conveying process treatment water from the treatment facility to the

slurry processing unit;

slurry pumping apparatus connectable in flow communication with the slurry delivery pipeline for pumping slurry from the slurry processing unit to the treatment facility for discharge into the containment vessel; and

make-up water pumping apparatus connectable in flow communication with the return pipeline for pumping process treatment water from the treatment facility to the slurry processing unit to be used as make-up water in the hopper;

Claim 2: (Currently amended) A slurry processing system according to claim 1, the slurry processing unit including slurry discharge piping coupled between the hopper and the slurry delivery pipeline, and the make-up water pumping apparatus including:

a sludge hopper;

a low pressure pump having an inlet port coupled to the containment vessel for receiving process treatment water and having an outlet port coupled to the inlet of the return pipeline;

a make-up water booster pump having an inlet port coupled in flow communication with the outlet of the return pipeline and having an outlet port for supplying process treatment water to the hopper; and

a slurry inlet pump;

a slurry discharge pump;

discharge piping coupled to the slurry inlet pump, the slurry

discharge pump and the slurry delivery pipeline, and

make-up water piping coupled between the make-up water return pipeline and to the output of the booster pump, including an injection pipe connected between the booster pump output for supplying process treatment water to the slurry discharge piping and a return make-up water line for supplying make-up water process treatment water to the sludge hopper.

Claim 3: (Currently amended) A slurry processing unit Slurry processing apparatus for conveying contaminated sludge from a body of water to an on-shore treatment facility of the type including a containment vessel for receiving slurry, means for discharging a chemical decontamination reagent into the containment vessel for treating the slurry, and means for separating sludge from the slurry, thereby yielding process treatment water and treated sludge for disposal or further treatment, comprising in combination:

a dredging barge including a dredge for removing contaminated sludge from a body of water;

a sludge hopper a slurry processing unit including a hopper disposed on the barge for receiving contaminated sludge removed from the body of water and means for mixing make-up water with sludge in the hopper thereby producing an aqueous slurry;

a slurry delivery pipeline connectable in flow communication with the slurry processing unit for transporting slurry from the slurry processing unit to the

treatment facility for discharge into the containment vessel;

a buoyant make-up water pipeline for conveying make-up treatment water from an across the body of water from the on-shore treatment facility to the sludge hopper dredging barge;

slurry pumping apparatus connected in flow communication with the delivery pipeline for pumping slurry from the slurry processing unit to the on-shore treatment facility for discharge into the containment vessel; and

make-up water pumping apparatus connected in flow communication with the return pipeline for pumping process treatment water from the treatment facility to the dredge to be used as make-up water in the hopper .

an inlet make-up booster pump;

inlet water piping connecting the make-up water pipeline to the sludge hopper and to the inlet of the booster pump;

a slurry discharge pump;

slurry piping connecting the output of the inlet slurry pump to the input of the slurry discharge pump;

discharge piping connected between the outlet of the discharge pump and the slurry delivery pipeline;

make-up water piping having an input connected to the output of the inlet make-up water pump; and

make-up water injection piping connected to an intermediate point of the slurry piping.

Claim 4: (Currently amended) A closed loop slurry processing system for pumping varying compositions of slurry ~~via a floating delivery pipeline from a slurry processing unit on dredging barge floating on a body of water to an on-shore treatment facility of the type including a containment vessel for receiving slurry, means for discharging a chemical decontamination reagent into the containment vessel for treating the slurry, and means for separating sludge from the slurry, thereby yielding process treatment water and treated sludge for disposal or further treatment~~ comprising, in combination:

a buoyant delivery pipeline coupled in series flow relation with the slurry processing unit and the containment vessel for conveying slurry from the dredging barge across the body of water to the on-shore treatment facility for discharge into the containment vessel;

a buoyant return pipeline connectable to the on-shore treatment facility coupled in series flow relation with the containment vessel and the slurry processing unit for supplying process treatment water as make-up water to the input of a slurry processing unit of the type including an inlet make-up water booster pump and an inlet slurry pump to the slurry processing unit;

slurry pumping apparatus connected in flow communication with the delivery pipeline for pumping slurry from the slurry processing unit to the on-shore treatment facility;

make-up water pumping apparatus connected in flow communication with the return pipeline for pumping process treatment water from the treatment

facility to the sludge processing unit; and

whereby process treatment water produced in the treatment facility can be used and recycled for use as make-up water for diluting contaminated sludge and specific gravity adjustment in the sludge processing unit without releasing process treatment water or slurry into the body of water while the contaminated sludge is being processed.

a discharge pump;

slurry piping connecting the output of the inlet slurry pump to the input of the discharge pump;

discharge piping connected between an outlet of the discharge pump and the buoyant slurry pipeline; and

a low pressure pump coupled between the on-shore treatment facility and the return pipeline for supplying process treatment water that has been separated from the slurry solids to be used for initial sludge dilution in the dredge hopper and for specific gravity adjustment in one or more make-up water injection stations within the slurry processing unit.

Claims 5-11: (Cancelled)